

GOSPEL

Mt 11:2-11

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Are you the one who is to come, or must we wait for someone else?

John in his prison had heard what Christ was doing and he sent his disciples to ask him, 'Are you the one who is to come, or have we got to wait for someone else?' Jesus answered, 'Go back and tell John what you hear and see; the blind see again, and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised to life and the Good News is proclaimed to the poor; and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.'

As the messengers were leaving, Jesus began to talk to the people about John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go out to see? A man wearing fine clothes? Oh no, those who wear fine clothes are to be found in palaces. Then what did you go out for? To see a prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: he is the one of whom scripture says: Look, I am going to send my messenger before you; he will prepare your way before you. I tell you solemnly, of all the children born of women, a greater than John the Baptist has never been seen; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he is.'

■ The Gospel of the Lord.

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Breaking Open the Word

THE ONE WHO IS TO COME

Today's Gospel focus continues with John the Baptist, introduced to us last Sunday. From prison he sends his followers to Jesus to find out if he is the 'one who is to come or have we to wait for someone else?' This question picks up an early memory that some thought John might have been the Messiah. Jesus explicates his Messianic credentials to John's enquirers: the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear and the dead raised to life. In other words, Jesus affirms that he is the one who brings restoration, community and healing. Jesus' self-identification further affirms the blessedness of those who remain faithful to him.

In the biblical world, 'faith' was another way of affirming fidelity and commitment to another. This leads Jesus to attest, in this spirit of fidelity and commitment, John's prophetic mission of desert ascetism and preparation for the coming of the Messiah. As we come into these final days before Christmas, our role becomes like John: we align ourselves in fidelity and faith to the one who is to be born, who will bring healing and hope to our world that struggles to know this.

But we also hear Jesus' affirming words – the final sentence in today's Gospel passage addressed to us. Despite John's greatness as the one who prepares for the coming of Jesus, 'yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he'. The Gospel's audience, including us, are affirmed. We have unique status in the eyes of God. This divine promise accompanies us in the days ahead.

Fr Michael Trainor



THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT / A

14 DECEMBER 2025

FIRST READING

Isa 35:1-6, 10

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

God himself will come and save us.

Let the wilderness and the dry-lands exult,
let the wasteland rejoice and bloom,
let it bring forth flowers like the jonquil,
let it rejoice and sing for joy.

The glory of Lebanon is bestowed on it,
the splendour of Carmel and Sharon;
they shall see the glory of the Lord,
the splendour of our God.

Strengthen all weary hands,
steady all trembling knees
and say to all faint hearts,
'Courage! Do not be afraid.

'Look your God is coming,
vengeance is coming,
the retribution of God;
he is coming to save you.'

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,
the ears of the deaf unsealed,
then the lame shall leap like a deer
and the tongues of the dumb sing for joy,
for those the Lord has ransomed shall return.

They will come to Zion shouting for joy,
everlasting joy in their faces;
joy and gladness will go with them
and sorrow and lament be ended.

■ The word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 145:6-10. R. cf. Isa 35:4

R. Lord, come and save us. (or Alleluia!)

1. It is the Lord who keeps faith for ever, /
who is just to those who are oppressed. / It is
he who gives bread to the hungry, / the Lord,
who sets prisoners free. **R.**

2. It is the Lord who gives sight to the blind, /
who raises up those who are bowed down, /
the Lord, who protects the stranger / and
upholds the widow and orphan. **R.**



3. It is the Lord who loves the just / but
thwarts the path of the wicked. / The Lord
will reign for ever, / Zion's God, from age to
age. **R.**

SECOND READING

James 5:7-10

A reading from the letter of St James

*You also must be patient; do not lose heart, the
Lord's coming will be soon.*

Be patient, brothers, until the Lord's coming.
Think of a farmer: how patiently he waits for
the precious fruit of the ground until it has had
the autumn rains and the spring rains! You too
have to be patient; do not lose heart, because
the Lord's coming will be soon. Do not make
complaints against one another, brothers, so as
not to be brought to judgement yourselves; the
Judge is already to be seen waiting at the gates.
For your example, brothers, in submitting with
patience, take the prophets who spoke in the
name of the Lord.

■ The word of the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Isa 61:1; Lk 4:18

Alleluia, alleluia!

The spirit of the Lord is upon me;
he sent me to bring Good News to the poor.
Alleluia!

*Welcome to
St Nicholas' Catholic Parish,
Tamworth
for
The Third Sunday of Advent
Year A*

14th December 2025

Fr Christopher Onuekwusi – Parish Priest
Fr Clarence Canafe – Assistant Priest
stnicholasparish@armidale.catholic.org.au ☎ (02) 6766 2228
 Parish Website: <https://www.stnicholasparish.org.au/>

Parish Secretaries: Finance: Stephanie Hetherington - Mon/Tue 9-5pm
 Admin: Anne Jones Wed/Fri 9-5pm Pauline Skewes Thurs 9-1pm
Parish Office hours: Monday – Friday 9am - 5pm

Catholic schools in our parish

McCarthy Catholic College Principal: Mr Michael Whitton
 ☎ (02) 6761 0800 Students currently enrolled: 945
 St Nicholas Primary School Principal: Mr Peter Flynn
 ☎ (02) 6766 1500 Students currently enrolled: 590

ENTRANCE: Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice. Indeed, the Lord is near.

COMMUNION: Say to the faint of heart: Be strong and do not fear. Behold, our God will come, and he will save us.

‘THE BLIND SEE AGAIN’ Many of the Jewish people did not expect a Messiah like Jesus. Many wondered: ‘Are you the one who is to come?’ Jesus came not to exercise sovereignty and power over the people but to bring blessing to the poor and needy. Let us celebrate his birth this Christmas by being good news for the poor.

Psalter Week 3

Monday 15/12 St Nicholas' Mass 7am
 Num 24:2-7, 15-17 Ps 24:4-9 Mt 21:23-27

Tuesday 16/12 St Mary's Mass 9am
 Zeph 3:1-2, 9-13 Ps 33:2-3, 6-7, 16, 18-19, 23 Mt 21:28-32

Wednesday 17/12 St Nicholas' Mass 7am
 Gen 49:2, 8-10 Ps 71:1-4, 7-8, 17 Mt 1:1-17

Thursday 18/12 St Mary's Mass 9am
 Jer 23:5-8 Ps 71:1-2, 12-13, 18-19 Mt 1:18-24

Friday 19/12 St Nicholas' Mass 7am
 Judges 13:2-7, 24-25 Ps 70:3-6, 16-17 Lk 1:5-25

Saturday 20/12 St Nicholas' Mass 9am
 Is 7:10-14 Ps 23:1-6 Lk 1:26-38
Vigil Mass 6pm

Sunday 21/12 St Mary's 7.30am Mass
St Nicholas' 9.30am & 5.30pm

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION: Saturday 4pm – 5.30pm

BAPTISMS are held Saturdays at 11am & Sundays at 12 noon. If you wish to book a Baptism, please email or telephone the Parish Office on 67662228 for more information. Forms can also be submitted on our parish website.

Parish toilet is located in the Outdoor Function Area. Please ensure children are accompanied by an adult when leaving the Church during Mass to go to the toilet or for any other reason.

Parish Bulletin Deadline: Midday Wednesday – The Bulletin is printed on Thursday morning.

PRAYERFUL REFLECTION on the readings is always included on this Bulletin, after the Communion Antiphon. You are encouraged to reflect on this every week.

2026 Columban Art Calendars are available for purchase at the entrance to the church for \$10 per calendar.

A warm welcome to all new parishioners! To help you feel at home in our parish, we encourage you to introduce yourself to Father after Mass, or you might also consider exploring opportunities to get involved in parish life through various ministries and activities. If so, please see our Parish Notice Board or contact the Parish Office.

PARISH EVENTS – for the month ahead

17 Dec	Wed	Silent Adoration	10.30-11.30am	St Nicholas'
17 Dec	Wed	Advent Reconciliation	6pm	St Nicholas'
19 Dec	Fri	Eucharistic Adoration	6-7pm	St Nicholas'
19 Dec	Fri	End of School Term 4		
21 Dec	Sun	Birthday Blessing – All Masses		
21 Dec	Sun	The St Nicholas Choir to host	9.30am	St Nicholas'
		Morning tea after Mass this morning.		
25 Dec	Thu	CHRISTMAS DAY		
26 Dec	Fri	BOXING DAY		
26 Dec	Fri	FAMILY Eucharistic Adoration	6-7pm	St Nicholas'
		Followed by a light supper in the Parish Meeting Room		
31 Dec	Wed	Silent Adoration	10.30-11.30am	St Nicholas'
31 Dec	Wed	New Year's Eve		
01 Jan	Thu	New Year's Day		
04 Jan	Sun	Epiphany of the Lord		
07 Jan	Wed	Silent Adoration	10.30-11.30am	St Nicholas'
11 Jan	Sun	Baptism of the Lord		

THERE ARE NO FORMAL ROSTERS DURING JANUARY, except for money counters, altar linens, sacristy cleaners & candelabrum cleaners – their rosters will still appear each week.
PLEASE VOLUNTEER to help out at Masses as needed.
 Thankyou!



From the First Sunday in Advent, there will be a Christmas Tree in both of our Parish Churches. Baubles can be purchased for \$2 each and placed on the Tree – the proceeds go toward buying Christmas Cards for all residents of the local Nursing Homes.

ADVENT RECONCILIATION

Wednesday 17th December, 6pm at St Nicholas' Church. An opportunity to prepare ourselves for the NATIVITY of the LORD.



CHRISTMAS MASSES 2025

6pm Mass – Christmas Eve, St Nicholas' Church

Commentator:
 Greeter/Reader 1: Greeter/Reader 2:
 Offertory: Ex Min:
 Altar Servers:
 Music: St Nicholas' Choir Collection:
 Slides:

Midnight Mass – 12am St Nicholas' Church

Commentator:
 Greeter/Reader 1: Maria Gruer Greeter/Reader 2: Rica Utleg
 Offertory: Nico Paje Ex Min:
 Altar Servers:
 Music: St Nicholas' Choir Collection: Maria Gruer/Josie Cox

7.30am – Christmas Day St Mary's Church

Commentator: Matt Pawsey
 Greeter/Reader 1: Susan O'Halloran Greeter/Reader 2: Bernadette Virgen
 Offertory: Cheryl Higgins Ex Min: Deb Pawsey
 Altar Servers:
 Music: Grant Quinn Collector Bill Higgins

9.30am – Christmas Day St Nicholas' Church

Commentator:
 Greeter/Reader 1: Greeter/Reader 2:
 Offertory: Ex Min:
 Altar Servers:
 Music: St Nicholas' Choir Collection:

Please write your name on the clipboard at the entrance to the church if you wish to be rostered on for any of the Christmas Masses – thank you!

WEEKLY ROSTER – 13/14 December 2025

St Nicholas' Saturday 6pm 3rd Sunday of Advent
 C: Leonie Hansen G/R1: Pauline Skewes
 G/R2: Sister of Nazareth
 Ex Min: Kerrie Ackhurst Music: Noel Greacen
 Collection: David Raffaele/Bill Campbell/Morgan Hawthorne

St Mary's Sunday 7.30am
 C: Katrina Krogh G/R1: John Wallace G/R2: John Murphy
 Ex Min: Cheryl Higgins Music: Grant Quinn
 Altar Servers: Will Nguyen
 Collection: Carl Cavallaro/Bill Higgins

St Nicholas' Sunday 9.30am
 C: Anne Bowden G/R1: Jo Manalastas G/R2: Ben Lamey
 Ex Min: Fiona Downey
 Altar Servers: Sophie Dowsett/Abigail Nweke
 Music: St Nicholas Choir
 Collection: Maria Gruer/Josie Cox/Phil Elliott

St Nicholas' Sunday 5.30pm
 C: John Clery G/R1: Alison Hagley G/R2: Miriam Redolfi
 Ex Min: Claire Doherty Music: Recorded Music
 Altar Servers: Evangelyn Nijo/Hallie Buckman
 Collection: Volunteers

Counting Team: Gary Bryant/Andrew McGuirk
 Altar Linen: Kerrie Bryant
 Sacristy Cleaning: Marie Rice/Gemma and Michael Moy
 Candelabrum: Cecilia and Terry Dries 14/12/25 – 20/12/25

PLANNED GIVING: SUPPORTING OUR PRIESTS & PARISH

1ST Collection (supports the clergy)
 BSB: 082 105 A/C No: 001 023 584
 A/C Name: St Nicholas Presbytery

2nd Collection (Planned Giving for Parish maintenance)
 BSB: 082 105 A/C No: 001 003 255
 A/C Name: St Nicholas Parish

Ref: Planned Giving Number/or your name. Thank you for your support.

COLLECTIONS: 7th December 2025

1st Collection \$ 1489.00
 Planned Giving \$ 2018.00
 Loose \$ 290.75
 \$ 2308.75

Christmas Masses 2025

Christmas Eve: 6pm Family Mass at St Nicholas'
 12am Midnight Mass at St Nicholas'

Christmas Day: 7.30am Mass at St Mary's
 9.30am Mass at St Nicholas'

~No evening Mass in our parish on Christmas Day~

ROSTERS: If you wish your name to be added to, or removed from, any of the parish rosters in 2026 please contact the parish office no later than Friday 19th December. Thankyou!

*** CHRISTMAS OFFERING ***

is our collective Christmas gift to our priests. It is deposited in the Presbytery Account & used for the upkeep of the Priests – their food sustenance & the salary of the Presbytery housekeeper. The annual excess from this account is used to support the retired and sick clergy of our Diocese. Envelopes are available at the back of the church & on the pews. Your generosity will be most appreciated – Thank you!

Parish Pastoral Council – nominations are invited for new members to join in 2026. Please find nomination forms and a copy of the Constitution at the entrance to the church. The forms can be submitted in person to Fr Chris or by email to: fronuekwusi@armidale.catholic.org.au on or before Sunday, 18th January.

WEEKLY ROSTER – 20/21 December 2025

St Nicholas' Saturday 6pm 4th Sunday of Advent
 C: Giovanna McDougall G/R1: Paul McDougall
 G/R2: Belinda Tyrrell
 Ex Min: Leonie Hansen Music: Noel Greacen
 Collection: David Raffaele/Bill Campbell/Morgan Hawthorne

St Mary's Sunday 7.30am
 C: Joan Newley G/R1: Brian Thompson G/R2: Matt Pawsey
 Ex Min: Karen King Music: Grant Quinn
 Altar Servers: Will Nguyen
 Collection: Carl Cavallaro/Bill Higgins

St Nicholas' Sunday 9.30am
 C: Alison Hamilton G/R1: Tim Igbenije G/R2: Lucy Roberts
 Ex Min: Laura Hughes/Jennifer Hatfield
 Altar Servers: Amanda Nweke/Isaac Hetherington
 Music: St Nicholas Choir
 Collection: Maria Gruer/Josie Cox/Phil Elliott

St Nicholas' Sunday 5.30pm
 C: Henry Buckman G/R1: Carol Wheaton R2: Merrilyn Gaffney
 Ex Min: Tania Roberts Music: Recorded Music
 Altar Servers: Callum/Emmett Buckman
 Collection: Volunteers

Counting Team: Cecilia Dries/ Pauline Skewes
 Altar Linen: Cecilia Dries
 Sacristy Cleaning: St Nicholas Women Connecting
 Candelabrum: Brian Thompson 21/12/25 – 27/12/25

BAPTISMS: We pray for Elora Daley, Huttson Young, and Shannon D'Costa, who are receiving the sacrament of Baptism this weekend. May God bless them and their families.

CONGRATULATIONS: We warmly welcome Christy D'Costa, who is being received into the Catholic Church this weekend, and Mackinlye Hodson, who is receiving the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and First Eucharist. May God abundantly bless them.

PERPETUAL INTENTIONS: Please pray for the repose of the souls of Alec & Betty Fyffe and Cyril & Grace Cahill, who will be long remembered in our parish.

WE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO ARE SICK AT THIS TIME

Dan Daly, Brindley Cavallaro (Sydney), Rev. Fr Tony Castelli, Kath Donoghue, Colin Bryant, Darren Graham, Suzanne Perfrement, Kay Tucker, Ken Michell, Julie Michell, Judy Murphy, Steve Tierney, Richard Noad, Pat & Tony Favell, Kay Mason, Doreen Eunson, Maureen White (Orange), Cormac Downes (Uralla), Michael Bryant, Sullivan Hurn (Singleton), Carmel Bennett (Gladstone), Bill Dennis, Maddy Anderson (Sydney), Sherree Haylock, Russell Smith.

“At this Christmas when Christ comes, will He find a warm heart?

Mark the season of Advent by loving and serving others with God's own love and concern.” – St. Teresa of Calcutta

